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“We are the Menominee Nation, Wisconsin’s Nation”

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Menominee Nation News

There is a common thread that intertwines within the spirit and nature of Wausijaun, “Sparkling Waters” (Lillian Nelson) and Pe pon-nanah, “Winter Hawk” (Thomas Tousey). That spirit is the willingness in which both are willing to teach others the Menominee traditions, customs, culture and language. Both are traditional dancers.

Wausijaun had always gone dancing with her family throughout her life. Her parents encouraged her with their teachings that there are spirits in the dancing arena and they wanted her at her best and doing her best.

She encourages others to have their children learn to dance otherwise when they become an older child and observe others dancing they will wish they could dance. If a child never learns to dance, later that child will “go through life with a hurt in his head.”

Lillian and her husband, Loren have helped in taking care of children in need.

Thomas and his wife, Michelle are parents to four girls, Alicia (17), Candace (16), Tiffany (14) and Cassandra (11). The girls are “jingle” (healing) dress dancers while, Mom, Michelle fancy dances.

Pe pon-nanah recalled dancing years ago where the women danced clockwise in an inner circle while the men danced counter-clockwise. He stated this is not done anymore. Elders, he explained, taught him as a youngster how to fancy dance and what the body movements meant.

He noted he has danced in Canada and 39 states before he was 18 years old.

Wausijaun is a teacher of the Menominee language. In helping her students learn she encourages them to try hard. If they try hard, “they will learn”. And so, Elder Wausijaun is



MNN Photo

Traditional dancers, Wausijaun, “Sparkling Waters” (Lillian Nelson) and Pe pon-nanah, “Winter Hawk” (Thomas Tousey) will be featured in the newest image commercial ad for the Menominee Indian Tribe which is expected to be aired during the NFL Packer pre-season and regular football season. The commercial is also expected to be on a dedicated run in 2004. Wausijaun teaches Menominee language and culture at the Logging Museum. Pe pon-nanah is, one of six students, currently learning Menominee from Wausijaun to become a certified Menominee language teacher. Melanie White, Theresa Wescott, Joey Awonohopay, Ron Corn, Jr. and William Gii-shik Pyawasit are the other five students being trained in Menominee language and culture.

teaching Pe pon-nanah along with Melanie White, Theresa Wescott, Joey Awonohopay, Ron Corn, Jr. and William Gii-shik Pyawasit.

It isn’t only the language lessons which have brought teacher and student together.

Maybe you spotted the photographer and his assistant who visited the Land of the Menominee on Thursday, June 26 and Friday, June 27, 2003.

Photographer, Mike Roemer, of Appleton, visited and photographed “Sparkling Waters” and “Winter Hawk” along with landmarks of the reservation and county for a video which is being produced to boost tourism for the Menominee Tribe.

Sights Mike visited to photograph

included the rafting on the Wolf River, the Logging Museum, Keshena Pow-wow Bowl, the College of Menominee Nation and the observation tower for a shot of the beautiful forest, home to 45 species of trees.

When the project is complete a video will be the end result which will be compiled into a television commercial. The timing couldn’t be better! With the commercial scheduled to air during the preseason Packer football season; the commercial is also scheduled to run during the regular Packer football season.

Next year the video will be featured in a dedicated commercial run.

Craig A. Searl, Director of Marketing for the Menominee

Casino-Bingo-Hotel. said this kind of effort has been something they have wanted to do forever. Craig said he hoped the last words on the video would make the statement, “We are the Menominee Nation, Wisconsin’s Nation” to emphasize the contribution the Menominee Indian Tribe and Land has contributed to the State of Wisconsin. Final approval for the finished project will go before the Historical Preservation Board.

It is hoped the Annual Menominee Nation Contest Pow-wow will also be featured in the video.

Both video and photographer are subcontracted through Chesapeake Advertising located in Baltimore, Maryland.

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